

**SB 221: An Act Including Companion Animal Hoarding; in 45-8-211**

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**On behalf of the 66 Montana Animal Care Association's public and private shelters and societies and the more than 14,000 Humane Society of the United States MONTANA members please DO PASS SB 221 AS AMENDED because:**

1) Hoarding is a real and growing problem in Montana. Some of the Committee members have heard about the major cases like the Kellogg horse/dog hoarder (200 horses/no tack) Camp Collie (\$250K) Camp Husky (over 100K and 48K direct loss to H.S), and most recently Operation New Beginnings in Billings which could easily be the most expensive of them all. But there are dozens of smaller potential cases that could not be properly addressed because we did not have this law. This includes 128 cats in a single wide trailer home in Greenough, MT. 488 lap dogs in a Yellowstone county retired couples yard, 300 cats in a great falls home, 120 parrots in an underfunded rescue hoarder situation, 100 cats and 88 dogs in Carbon County, 1800 rats and snakes in an eastern Montana warehouse. Right now today my office is working both non judicially and with law enforcement on no fewer than six alleged hoarder cases in Montana.

2) Hoarder Cases are like nothing you may have ever seen. I have worked more than 30 major hoarder cases in my region including cases with 770 animals, 46 African lions, and most recently 300 dogs, birds, and horses in Billings. Each case is unique...but they all share several characteristics:

a) They are disaster zones requiring a safety officer to protect the responders from injury from debris, lung damage due to ammonia or other toxic smells, and huge resources to respond to the disasters. One of my hoarder cases was actually declared a gubernatorial disaster because of the expense and the need for the National Guard to provide security for the confiscated animals

b) The suspect needs social welfare and mental health services and is in complete denial about the condition and health of the animals despite the evidence, the horrific conditions and the finding of dead and dying animals on the property.

c) They always have more animals of multiple species and the hoarder does not have the resources, time or ability to maintain minimum standards for themselves or the animals.

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**3) We further support HB 221 with suggested amendments because it:**

- **Addresses the concerns of County Prosecutors by giving them the tools/options they need:**
- **Addresses the concerns of legitimate breeders because of the elements required in (5) A-D**
- **Addresses the concerns of MACA and humane society shelters because it help us to be proactive with these cases and get earlier intervention and avoid cases costing tens of thousands of dollars;**
- **HELPS the suspect by differentiating these cases from other cruelty cases and to bring them the social welfare or other counseling they may need.**

**In closing... In my 26 years of employment with Police Departments, Private Humane Societies and now 17 years with The HSUS... This compromise bill hammered out yesterday by many key stakeholders is a primary answer that will help the people, the agencies, the state and the animals that get caught up in these huge emergency responses that are hoarder cases.**

**Please pass this bill from committee and strongly support it on the floor. It is a bill long needed and long worked on and this amended draft is the answer to the unique problems created by these unique cases.**

**On behalf of those who work in the trenches on these often horrific cases... THANK YOU for considering giving us the tools we need to help these people and animals.**

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**Dave Pauli Montana Animal Care Association  
Humane Society of the United States Regional Director**